Dr. Joseph Berkson writing in The Cancer Bulletin, challenges the statistical association between cigarette smoking and lung cancer. His views were reported in news stories including a syndicated article by John Troan.

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JOURNAL AMERICAN
New York, New York
July 7, 1963

HELD UNPROVEN

Doubt Cigaret Cancer Link

A Mayo Clinic researcher yesterday challenged statistical studies that linked cigaret smoking with a higher death rate.

There is a "distinct and real possibility" that the studies' results stemmed from a "statistical fallacy in the data," he said.

The statements by Dr. Joseph Berkson, "dean of American medical statisticians" and a non-smoker himself, were contained in the May-June issue of The Cancer Bulletin.

NOT REPRESENTATIVE

The possible error, he said, could stem from the fact that the populations studied were not a random sample of the U.S. population "or any defined segment of it."

They were made "on the men who answered the questionnaires," he said.

Trying to extend such findings to the general population could be misleading, he went on.

Dr. Berkson also declared there was "a widespread misunderstanding" that these studies "showed smokers to have a higher death rate from lung cancer than non-smokers."

IMMEDIATE PROBLEM

To discover the scientific explanation of these "extraordinary findings," he said, is the problem in hand. One possibility, he said, is some unknown constitutional difference that makes some persons smokers and others non-smokers.

He said that in the past decade, although perhaps almost a billion dollars has been allocated by the U.S. Public Health Service for cancer investigation, so far as he knew, "little or none" has been expended "for the experimental investigation of this particular problem of smoking and lung cancer."

Another report raising questions on the relationship of cigaret smoking and lung cancer is contained in the June issue of "California Medicine."

GENETIC FACTORS

Its author, Dr. Leroy Hyde, of Long Beach, said recent studies re-emphasized the importance of genetic factors. They also have shown a large number of significent psychologic variables between smokers and non-smokers.

He pointed, too, to growing evidence incriminating air pollution.

While cigaret smoking may be harmful to some persons, such as those with bronchial asthma, Dr. Hyde said, "the casual relationship of cigaret smoking to lung cancer is certainly unproved."

WORLD TELEGRAM
New York, New York
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Cigaret-Cancer Link Unproven, 2 MDs Say

Two leading doctors claim that existing data fails to establish a link between lung cancer and smoking.

Writing in the Cancer Bulletin, Dr. Joseph Berkson, head of the division of biometry and medical statistics at the Mayo Clinic, asserts that statistical studies on whether cancer and the use of tobacco in general are related "are not conclusive."

Studies Needed

"They must be confirmed by experimental studies and other types of investigation," Dr. Berkson declared. "And this has not happened."

The available findings "call for an investigative program of wide scope and intense pursuit to search out their meaning . . . but compared with the dimensions of the problem, little has been done," he said.

28-Case Report

Dr. Leroy Hyde of the University of California department of medicine, after summarizing the results of 28 recent studies on cigaret smoking in an article appearing in California Medicine, concludes:

"There is no doubt that cigaret smoking may be harmful for certain people. However, the casual relationship of cigaret smoking to lung cancer is certainly unproved."

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Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/fnyk0000